NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

Plane Rattled, Then Plunged

CRASH from A3

ting was "really unusual" and could be an indication of trouble with the plane's right engine.

As more details of the flight's final moments emerged, relatives of those killed began flowing into the family assistance center, where the city provided social services such as mental health counselors and help in getting visas to the Dominican Republic, the homeland of many aboard the jet.

Maria Lugo, 35, said she was beginning to overcome the initial shock and denial of losing her sister-in-law, Ramona Pimentera, 52.

"What went through my mind was that she hadn't gotten on the flight, that the plane had left her, that she was around someplace and she was going to come back home," Lugo said. "What I'm hoping for now is that we can recover her corpse, so we can take it to the Dominican Republic, because by now I know there's no hope of recovering her alive."

An emotional Gov. George Pataki, who joined Giuliani at the Javits Center, spoke of heart-rending encounters with bereaved family members.

"A sister showed me a picture of her brother — he was from Washington Heights — who was a U.S. Navy sailor. And he had been on the Enterprise serving on active duty for seven months. They had just gotten back to New York; I believe it was two days ago," the governor said. "And he was flying down to the Dominican Republic to see his parents and say, 'Hello.' And he was lost of that flight. This is the type of tragedy that we're dealing with."

Last night, the governor walked through the heavily Dominican neighborhood of Washington Heights, dining and meeting with community leaders.

"We're going to try to do what we did for the World Trade Center families for the families of this flight," Pataki said. "We know there is enormous emotional suffering. We have to share the tears and the hugs and give our prayers.

"But there will also be economic difficulties. We want to try to get the generosity and the spirit and hearts of New Yorkers to contribute so we can help families economically, as well."

In Belle Harbor, visiting nurse Nancy Girlando, 43, remembered both friends and patients missing and presumed dead since the inferno from the crash enveloped Beach 131st Street. "Everyone knows them. It's that kind of community," she said of the missing residents. "This neighborhood can't take much more. It's a hard hit for Rockaway."

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